CBS NEWS SPECIAL REPORT -THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT NIXON (4 22 1994)

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From Friday, April 22nd, 1994 CBS NEWS live coverage of the death of President Richard M. Nixon with Dan Rather. Nixon died at 9:08 P.M E.T

- Coverage runs from 10:32 P.M E.T - 11:12 P.M E.T

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[Music] good evening former president richard nixon died tonight here in new york city mr nixon was 81 and for many of those years president nixon wrote a political roller coaster from the heights of power to the deepest political disgrace and come back after come back richard dixon was just back from his latest political appearance on the world stage a trip to moscow when he fell ill monday night he suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed and unable to speak then an even more serious complication swelling of the brain mr nixon was kept in intensive care listed in critical condition he died at the hospital a short while ago the announcement was made officially just a few seconds ago cbs news correspondent anthony mason is standing by outside new york hospital with the latest anthony dan president nixon was admitted here to new york hospital on monday afternoon after suffering a massive stroke at his home in new jersey here outside of new york city he was brought here to this hospital the immediate effect of the stroke was as you mentioned that he had partial paralysis on the right side and loss of speech but it was thought he was out of danger he was even released from intensive care then suddenly overnight he experienced swelling in the brain that led to serious concern but president nixon had left specific instructions that he didn't want not want to be placed on any serious life support mechanism he was given no life support measures no respirator was put on him at that point in time the feeling was that the the brain swelling was going to lead to pressure on the brain stem affect his heartbeat and breathing ultimately the president was in intensive care for a couple of days he died here this evening as you say at the age of 81. dan how was the official announcement handled anthony well dan there still has been no official announcement here at the hospital we you have heard official announcement

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you have heard official announcement over i believe the wire services but we have heard no no message from the doctors inside here at the hospital itself anthony mason live at the hospital where president richard nim nixon has just died from start to finish richard milhous nixon was a scrapper a fighter of a politician and a man of stark contradictions it was even a part of his roots growing up where hope and dust ran thick in a california country town yorba linda was a dusty california farm town in 1913 a place of hope for failed workers from the east richard milhous nixon was born into such a struggling family i am not and never have been a member of the communist party it was in the forties in the house committee on un-american activities that mr nixon made his first national mark and the country heard that combative voice he was then a member of congress and a feisty anti-communist i appeared before the federal grand jury today and submitted to them for their examination the five rolls of microfilm of state department documents which were taken from mr whitaker chambers by the committee on american activities he learned his debating skills at duke university law school and by now was married to former school teacher pat ryan with his first daughter tricia just a year

old but i say that a time when millions of young americans are fighting and dying overseas fighting the communist enemy there we need a fair we need a same and we need an effective program for dealing with the communists right here in the united states of america all was going well for young mr nixon he was a senator and had just won the republican party's nomination for the vice presidency he won but it took that combative spirit to get by an accusation that he had taken campaign funds for his personal use pat doesn't have a mink coat but she does have a respectable republican cloth coat it became known as the checkers speech named for the gift he did admit accepting a puppy dog

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accepting a puppy dog black and white spotted and our little girl trisha the six-year-old named it checkers and you know the kids like all kids love the dog and i just want to say this right now that regardless of what they say about it we're going to keep it after that richard nixon continued to face a series of personal and political crises a state trip to south america put him at personal risk communists attacking him in venezuela there are some instances where you may be ahead of us for example in the development of your of the thrust of your rockets for the investigation of outer space there may be some instances for example color television where we're ahead of you a debate with soviet leader nikita who made the vice president look positively diplomatic [Music] us wrong wrong we are ahead of you in rockets as well as in this technique i do not capitulate the next moment of crisis had a historic look about it the nationally televised debate between richard m nixon and john f kennedy as their party's nominees for president of the united states the things that senator kennedy has said many of us can agree with there is no question but that we cannot discuss our internal affairs in the united states without recognizing that they have a tremendous bearing on our international position it is widely accepted that this performance lost the election for him not so much what he said but wrote the pundits how he looked it was his eyes his sweating even his upper lip i want senator kennedy to know and i want all of you to know that uh certainly if this trend does continue and he does become our next president that he will have my whole heart and support the

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my whole heart and support the concession speech was the first he had had to make the second concession speech came in his very next campaign for governor of california it was as memorable as it was bitter but as i leave you i want you to know just think how much you're going to be missing you don't have nixon to kick around anymore of course this was just a foreshadowing of the stormy relationship between richard dixon and the press and in many ways a stormy relationship between richard nixon and large segments of the american public a stormy relationship that lasted for decades and into and after his presidency the vietnam war escalation of the combat over there and escalation of the protests at home were the backdrop for the presidential campaign of 1968 richard nixon defeated democrat hubert humphrey in 1972 same backdrop different opponent peace candidate george mcgovern president nixon was re-elected by a huge margin then watergate then resignation this is a live cbs news special report on the death of president nixon richard m nixon died this evening at a hospital here in new york city at that hospital cbs news correspondent anthony mason is standing by anthony's dan the hospital has finally released an official statement a spokesman appeared outside the hospital door here just a few moments ago there was no there were no comments there no there were no questions allowed the hospital simply passed out uh this piece of paper which says president richard m nixon died at 9 08 p.m on april 22nd as a result of a massive stroke which he suffered on monday april 18th his family was with him that is of course a reference to his two daughters trisha nixon eisenhower and trisha nixon cox excuse me and julie nixon eisenhower who have been here throughout much of this president nixon's wife of course pat nixon died last june also at the age of 81. dan anthony mason live at the hospital

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dan anthony mason live at the hospital thank you we also want to note you may want to note that we are standing by for a white house statement from president clinton at the white house in washington we expect to bring that to you live shortly of all the things richard m nixon said and did in his long political life for most people the sad fact is watergate is the defining event watergate that catch-all phrase for a rolling collection of crimes and politically ethical wrongdoing that made richard nixon the only president ever to resign and to resign in disgrace let others wallow with watergate we're going to do our job i had no prior knowledge of the watergate break-in i neither took part in nor knew about any of the subsequent cover-up activities richard nixon first tried to prevent the investigation of criminal activity by him and his top staff then he tried to end it before the worst could be uncovered but the law and the courts forced him to spend much of his second term explaining what happened during his first what happened was a long series of criminal acts lumped together under the name watergate because the watergate burglary was the first to be discovered early on the morning of june 17 1972 five men were arrested in democratic party headquarters in the watergate office building they were carrying bugging and burglary gear and cameras one the cia experienced james mccord was quote security coordinator for the nixon reelection campaign committee two others also had ties to the fbi and the cia gordon liddy and howard hunt they escaped that night but were later found to be white house consultants yet all through the campaign year president nixon insisted that he and his white house staff were not involved it was a lie all five men connected to the original

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all five men connected to the original political break-in pleaded guilty that made it difficult at the time to disprove what president nixon claimed that it was just a third-rate burglary by men who despite their white house connections were often an enterprise of their own that too was a lie and a felony obstruction of justice but it took a long time to unravel it a nixon campaign manager jeb magruder actually had authorized payment for the break-in but denied knowing what it was for but later he admitted to a grand jury that he had known what it was for and had lied to hide it white house counsel john dean admitted a central role in the planning and cover-up on april 17 president nixon took a new revised position i can report today that there have been major developments in the case concerning which it would be improper to be more specific now except to say that real progress has been made in finding the truth but containing the situation down at a dean magruder level didn't work because their sworn testimony pointed higher within two weeks president nixon had to fire his two closest white house associates h.r bob halterman and john ehrlichman but he defended their motives in any organization the man at the top must bear the responsibility that responsibility therefore belongs here in his office i accept it the new disclosures reinvigorated federal prosecutors and the united states congress the senate decided unanimously to name a special investigating committee and on may 17 1973 chairman sam urban of north carolina opened the televised hearings that would take the many crimes of watergate deep into the homes and hearts of america magruder said yes there had been a cover-up and dean said the president sworn to uphold the

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said the president sworn to uphold the law had been a part of this criminal activity well i think there was no question that the cover-up began that saturday when we realized it was a break-in i don't think there was ever any discussion that there wouldn't be a cover-up i left the meeting with the impression that the president was well aware of what had been going on regarding the success of keeping the white house out of the watergate scandal it wasn't a question of telling the truth it was the question of not involving him at all so that he could go on through the campaign without being involved in this type of activity and i'm talking about the white house horrors particularly the white house crimes and horrors that mitchell called the central reason for the cover-up represented another chapter in the unfolding scandals mr nixon was outraged by the leaking of the so-called pentagon papers a classified study of the vietnam war in 1970 he approved a plan of fbi break-ins and surveillance of citizens he deemed quote domestic security threats that plan was canceled when the fbi director j edgar hoover refused to go along instead a special personal investigation unit was set up inside the white house itself in 1971 that unit was nicknamed the plumbers because it was designed to plug leaks of what president nixon considered to be official secrets but the unit did much more than that with instructions

to quote nail him to the wall the plumbers illegally tried to obtain damaging information against daniel ellsberg who was then on trial for leaking the pentagon papers for president nixon this was a quote national security matter and let me say i think it is time in this country to quit making national heroes out of those who steal secrets and publish them in the newspapers on grounds of quote national security mr nixon approved wiretapping of members of henry kissinger's national security

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henry kissinger's national security council staff journalists and even the president's brother donald nixon a category of domestic enemies was also created to be subjected to special harassment by the internal revenue service the fbi and other government agencies and political enemies became the object of a dirty tricks operation during the 1972 primary campaign as the revelations grew and the president's popularity began to collapse mr nixon promised full cooperation with a new investigation he also yielded reluctantly to congressional pressure to the naming of an independent special prosecutor outside the justice department his new attorney general elliot richardson chose harvard law professor archibald cox six weeks later another bombshell former white house aide alexander butterfield told the watergate committee of a new source of information inside the white house mr butterfield are you aware of the installation of any listening devices in the oval office of the president i was aware of listening devices yes sir and so opened the historic battle between special prosecutor cox and the white house for the tape recorded conversations in the oval office between mr nixon and his aides cox wanted the tapes as part of his criminal investigation but the president refused to turn them over claiming the conversations were constitutionally protected the president eventually proposed a compromise a neutral third party senator john stennis of mississippi would listen to the tapes and verify that a white house prepared summary of the nine tapes in question was accurate but cox had to agree to give up his quest in the courts for further evidence when he rejected the proposal i had no choice but to dismiss him in what came to be known as the saturday night massacre president nixon fired special prosecutor

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president nixon fired special prosecutor cox and his attorney general elliot richardson for refusing to fire cox himself president nixon then appointed a new special prosecutor leon jawarski who soon found himself grappling with unexplained gaps in crucial types and a newly defiant president one year of watergate is enough but it was just the beginning in march 1974 a new wave of federal indictments reached ever closer to the president himself john ellickman and charles coulson were indicted for their roles in authorizing the illegal break-in to daniel ellsberg's psychiatrist's office ehrlichman was convicted coulson pled guilty to a related count in the white house criminal cover-up for the watergate break-in colson erlichmann and h.r bob haltoman among others were indicted the grand jury was told that a president couldn't be indicted that he could only be impeached thus the grand jury named president nixon as an unindicted co-conspirator in the criminal case then the house judiciary committee began seriously looking into bringing articles of impeachment against the president finally in a last-ditch effort to stave off disaster president nixon sent nine tapes to the committee tapes he had already provided to the special prosecutor and he published his own transcripts as far as what the president personally knew and did with regard to watergate and the cover-up is concerned these materials together with those already made available will tell it all but the independent special prosecutor jaworski preparing for the cover-up trial wanted more 64 more tapes to be exact and this time the special prosecutor leon jaworski took the issue straight to the united states supreme court president nixon who had appointed some of the court's members hoped that he would win out but by an to zero vote the supreme court

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but by an to zero vote the supreme court held that the president had to surrender to the judge overseeing the cover-up trial to decide what should go to the grand jury after the supreme court decision president nixon turned over the tapes but then only after the house judiciary committee voted to recommend that the full

house impeach the president one transcript revealed that within six days after the watergate burglary president nixon was actively talking cover-up and trying to use the cia to block the fbi investigation it was the beginning of the last act of the nixon presidency under mounting pressure from old friends in congress the president made history on august 8th 1974 to continue to fight through the months ahead for my personal vindication would almost totally absorb the time and attention of both the president and the congress in a period when our entire focus should be on the great issues of peace abroad and prosperity without inflation at home therefore i shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow vice president four will be sworn in as president at that hour in this office a historic moment the only president ever to resign residing in disgrace and as a quote unindicted co-conspirator unquote in a criminal case was the low point foreign policy was the high point we want to move to that but first let me point out to you that president clinton is expected to appear on the steps outside the oval office very shortly and cbs news will carry that live as part of our live coverage of the death tonight of president richard m nixon now no one was more closely associated with president nixon's foreign policy

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nixon's foreign policy and particularly triumphs than former secretary of state henry kissinger we talked with dr kissinger about the man richard nixon and his policies let's talk about richard nixon the man what do you think of the most important things about richard nixon as a person that history may be inclined to overlook richard nixon was a very shy man very intellectual in many of his approaches to policy who really liked to reflect in solitude about where he thought america should go and then discuss the idea with a few close advisors many of the problems he had with other people derived from this reclusiveness from his difficulty in making uh in making contact because he was afraid of being rejected this was true on the social level on the working level he had no such problems and on the working level he was also always focused analytical precise and dedicated what do you consider to be the principal achievement of foreign policy during the next years but the fundamental contribution richard nixon made to the conduct of foreign policy beyond any individual achievement was to try to see it as a whole to try to define objectives for the united states in what was beginning already to become a new era and then to relate the various elements

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and then to relate the various elements of the strategy to each other this led him into opening to china which was a quintessentially nixon initiative uh it led him into easing relations with the soviet union while always keeping in mind that they were a strategic adversary it enabled him to construct a new policy for the middle east which started the peace process which is still going on and it enabled him also to begin the process of the european security conference which then in the ford administration led to the europe to the helsinki agreement which enshrined human rights in an international agreement and was one of the contributing causes to the collapse of the soviet union dr kirsten you're a historian is there any chance or isn't there that future historians may decide that richard nixon's foreign policy achievements supersede the criminal acts we put under the general title of watergate i would not agree with having richard nixon listed as con as conducting criminal acts to begin with i think the watergate was a series of stupidities a series of grave errors uh i believe that history will treat richard nixon as one of the significant american presidents and will believe that on balance on decided balance he's deserved well of his country this may be a difficult question particularly under the circumstances but do you have any idea what richard nixon would prefer to have on his historical tombstone the synopsis of his life and achievements you have any idea

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life and achievements you have any idea what that might be you know people will find it difficult to believe but one of the presidents that nixon most revered was woodrow wilson and he had a picture of woodrow wilson in the cabinet room i believe that he would like to be remembered as having moved the world towards a greater degree of priest and having related his country to a worthy role in creating an international structure i think those were his great ambitions is there any one thing that you worry most richard nixon will be

misunderstood about as time goes by well richard nixon was president of the united states in a very anguishing period he was a great patriot as a president he felt an obligation to end a war which he after all inherited which he had not created in terms which he considered honorable and therefore he was caught in a maelstrom of criticism by people who equally sincerely believed that it was a moral necessity to end this world i think his stats should enable us to transcend that particular tragedy and to recognize that the objectives of the two sides were very similar and that much depended on the perspective from which they sat honorable peace goes with the job description of a president

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president moral concern goes with the job description of outside critics and now that richard nixon has disappeared from the scene we should recognize what his goals were and make internal peace on those issues dr kissinger thanks dr henry kissinger who was first national security adviser and then secretary of state under the now late president richard m nixon as we wait for president clinton to make a live appearance just outside the oval office in washington d.c as part of our continuing live cbs news coverage on the death of president nixon let's bring in our cbs news chief washington correspondent bob shiver bob richard nixon president nixon a complicated man in a complicated time well he certainly was dan and people loved him people hated him some people just found him kind of quirkily amusing i suppose but however you felt about him i think everyone found him fascinating certainly he was one of the most fascinating figures of our time something of a tragic figure but a tragic figure on a grand scale almost a shakespearean scale you you have to wonder tonight if perhaps this is not just the way richard nixon would have wanted it it came late on a friday night after the first edition of the newspaper deadlines had passed after most of the congress had left town for the weekend he just sort of went quietly bob president nixon had remained active staying in touch with particularly republican presidents ronald reagan and george bush the last time he was in washington he made an appearance there at the capitol did you know well he did he made several appearances here over the years dan and he was he was always warmly received as as the years passed

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as as the years passed a lot of people in washington came to value richard nixon's advice and counsel first they sort of solicited it behind the solicited it behind the scenes then as the decade of the 90s approached you would begin to see richard nixon out front talking with people he had news conferences here he would meet with president bush he talked with the president clinton by phone i think one of the interesting things is going to be to see whether they have a state funeral for the president here in washington i was talking to some of the people who worked for richard nixon today and he apparently told some of his advanced people that worked for him back in those days he did not want to have a state funeral he did not want to lie in state here they quoted him as saying i don't want them looking at me after i've gone i have no idea of knowing how true that is but we'll have to wait and see if indeed that happens whether there will be a funeral here or whether the body will be taken directly to california where i understand that the burial will be well as we await president clinton to come out and make his remarks on the death of president nixon just to pick up on your point bob as far as i know there's been no official announcement made about the arrangements of funeral arrangements or memorial service arrangements for president nixon although there has been talk among many people close to the nixon family that perhaps there would be a memorial service in yorba linda perhaps at the nixon memorial library in southern california sometime next week but all of that was just in the talking stage so far as i know no final arrangements have been officially announced bob watergate that whole series of criminal acts that are under that catch word is or is not the feeling in washington these last few years that we know the story the whole story on watergate what has been the reaction to these continuing reports that well there was some intelligence agency activity connected

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intelligence agency activity connected with watergate about which we've never really gotten the full story well it's very hard to say dan it's almost like the kennedy assassination because you know there were so many questions left unanswered at the time i think you will always have questions you will always have theories be advanced i know today the the main thing that was going around washington today dan was do you suppose now we'll find out who watergate i mean who who deep throat was uh there are just so many questions that were raised about all of this and i'm not sure we'll ever know the answers uh to any of them or that that everyone will be satisfied entirely uh with the answers that they get but they i i suspect that we'll see a lot of those questions revived now just as we see questions about the kennedy assassination revive um when we reach anniversaries of president kennedy's death our chief washington correspondent bob schieffer live on capitol hill now let's switch to the hospital here in new york and cbs news correspondent anthony mason anthony dan the latest official word we have here comes from a spokesperson from the new york city police department who has now told us officially that president nixon's body has been taken from the hospital as you mentioned there is no official word on where it is going to be taken although spokespeople for president nixon's for president nixon had indicated earlier that the president would prefer had expressed a preference that the body be taken directly to california and that is what we are presuming as you mentioned at this point in time dan bob uh chief we're back in washington has there been any reaction since the death of president nixon was announced within the hour no none dan all of official washington is closed down this is the time when there is really nobody in washington on a friday night both the house and senate adjourned the senate adjourned last night was not in session today so most of the people here in official washington the elected officials have left town for the weekend uh as you we're all waiting now for the

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uh as you we're all waiting now for the president to make the official reaction to this uh it was an interesting thing dan in that this week as we'd go around and try to talk to people to get their reactions about president nixon senator dole for example said i don't want to talk about it until after the president is gone people did not want to do interviews in advance finally late today senator dole did consent to talk to some reporters about richard nixon but again he talked about him as if if he were still alive and in good health i think the main point he made was he said history will remember richard nixon for more than watergate i think you'll hear that a lot there there there was a sense dan i think in washington that that was as much to admire about the way richard nixon conducted himself after he left the presidency as there was to condemn perhaps while he was in the presidency bob chief you're live on capitol hill let's switch now to a live picture just outside the oval office in washington dc where we are expecting president bill clinton to come out any time the picture here is taken from roughly the rose garden back toward the oval office that door you see just to the left of the column that's the door through which presidents walk out to come to the rose garden just slightly off to the right are microphones and flags by the way at that door at the base of that when president nixon was still president there were the spike marks left by president eisenhower when he was in the oval office they've since been removed those spike marks from president eisenhower's golf shoes were still there in the oval office when richard nixon was president and now gone president clinton walking somberly to the position where he will address the nation on the occasion of the death of the only president of the united states ever to have

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resigned it is my sad duty to report to the people of the united states that richard m nixon who served as our 37th president died this evening in new york city at 9 08 pm with his family at his side hillary and i send our deepest condolences to the entire nixon family we hope that trisha and edward cox and their son christopher and julie and david eisenhower and their children jenny alex and melanie know that the best wishes of all their fellow americans are with them during their moment of sorrow it's impossible to be in this job without feeling a special bond with the people who have gone before and i was deeply grateful to president nixon for his wise counsel on so many occasions on many issues over the last year his service to me and to our country during this period was like the rest of his service to the nation for nearly half century he gave of himself with intelligence and devotion to duty and his country owes him a debt of gratitude for that service we face today a world of increasing uncertainty and difficult challenges but it is a world of great opportunity in no

small part because of the vision of richard nixon during a particularly difficult period of the cold war he understood the threat of communism but he also had the wisdom to know when it was time to reach out to the soviet union and to china all americans indeed all people throughout the world owe him what he regarded as the ultimate compliment he was a statesman who sought to build a lasting structure

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lasting structure of peace to be sure he experienced his fair share of adversity and controversy but his resilience and his diligent desire to give something back to this country and to the world provide a lesson for all of us about maintaining our faith in the future in spite of everything that faith led president nixon to leave his mark on his times as few national histories of two few national figures have done in our history and led him to continue to serve right up to the end of his life indeed no less than a month before his passing he was still in touch with me about the great issues of this day again i say the the sorrow and the best wishes of the american people are with president nixon's family we thank them and our prayers are with them thank you mr president i have i spoke with both trisha cox and julie eisenhower this evening and we had a very good visit why are you going to the funeral excuse me are you going to go to the funeral i intend to go yes the family has not made announcements and i'm not sure they made final decisions it's my understanding that the funeral will be in california and they'll announce something about it to probably tomorrow i can't say that can you tell us something about your relationship with mr nixon yes well we made contact with each other shortly after i think shortly after the election either that or shortly after i came in here and then as you will remember i had him up to the white house for a visit we talked to frequently on the phone i sought his advice about a number of issues in foreign policy and we talked quite a

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in foreign policy and we talked quite a lot about russia we had a good long visit right before he went to russia and as i said just a month ago today i think he penned his last letter to me of his thoughts on that trip and his advice so our relationship continued to be warm and constructive throughout the period of my presidency and he went out of his way to to give me his best advice and i was incredibly impressed with the energy and the vigor and frankly the rigor that he brought to analyzing this issue and thank you very much president bill clinton as the lights of the tall washington monument blinked in the background and in the distance the statue of thomas jefferson could be seen in just down the block of course the brooding statue of the great abe lincoln and in a place where the president can see the very top lights of the capital of the united states president clinton announcing officially and formally the death of former president nixon and so tonight the death of former president richard mildhouse nixon here in new york at the age of 81. from joe mccarthy to george mcgovern from moscow to the mekong delta from yorba linda to watergate richard nixon was a constant in our lives for better and for worse a constant for decades and he was the ultimate political contradiction a hard cold warrior who could open doors to china and russia a political brawler who could bristle that every even perceived slight a skillful user of madison avenue and hollywood pr who often looked harsh and uncomfortable in the spotlight in richard nixon were all the

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in richard nixon were all the contradictions and cross currents that were america and american politics from the cold war to watergate to the brink of the 21st century he and all of the rest of us grew together again for better and for worse and shared a lot of history together including a tragedy that many of written would be worthy of an ancient greek drama there will be more about the life and legacy of former president richard nixon on your late local news and on tomorrow night's cbs evening news here with bob schieffer for now and for all of us at cbs news dan rather in new york good night

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